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University student targeted by Trump leaves the US



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A Cornell University graduate student who had his US visa revoked due to protest activities against Israel has chosen to leave the US rather than be deported.

Momodou Taal, who is a joint citizen of the UK and The Gambia, had his student visa revoked due to his on-campus protest activities last year as the Israel-Gaza war raged.

Mr Taal previously sued to block his deportation, but on Monday posted on X that he had chosen to leave the country "free and with my head held high". It comes after a judge had denied his request to delay his deportation.

The Trump administration is cracking down on international students who have been active in protests against Israel on university campuses.

Mr Taal is at least the second international student to opt to leave the US after being targeted for removal by the US Department of Homeland Security. The Trump administration identifies these cases as "self-deportations".

"Given what we have seen across the United States, I have lost faith that a favourable ruling from the courts would guarantee my personal safety and ability to express my beliefs," Mr Taal posted on X on Monday.

"I have lost faith I could walk the streets without being abducted. Weighing up these options. I took the decision to leave on my own terms."

Mr Taal was suspended twice by Cornell, an Ivy League school in upstate New York, due to protest activities. On the day of the Hamas attack against Israel in 2023, he posted: "Glory to the Resistance."

"We are in solidarity with the armed resistance in Palestine from the river to the sea," he later told a crowd of protesters, according to [The Cornell Daily Sun](#) newspaper.

At least 300 university students had their student visas revoked due to involvement in pro-Palestinian protests, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said last week.

Trump officials said the Immigration and Nationality Act allows the State Department to deport non-citizens who are "adversarial to the foreign policy and national security interests" of the US.

The arrests are a part of Trump's pledge to combat what the administration has classified as antisemitism, which was written into an executive order in January.

Critics have decried the deportations as a violation of free speech.

Another student who chose to flee the US, Indian scholar Ranjani Srinivasan, told CNN that she wants to clear her name.

"I'm not a terrorist sympathiser," she told CNN, adding: "I'm literally just a random student."

She added that she hopes to re-enrol at Columbia University, which was the epicentre of student protests last year, and finish her PhD programme.

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